people to people contact is a significant factor in generating goodwill;and promoting bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, and it has consistently endeavoured to negotiate a visa regime that encourages such contacts. In keeping with this policy, Government announced unilateral visa liberalizations in September 2004, which included, *inter alia,* multiple entry visas for accredited journalists, exemption from reporting to the police for various categories of Pakistani nationals such as those above 65 years of age, academicians, and doctors. In December 2004, Government announced additional visa liberalization measures such as visa on arrival at Wagah for certain categories of people and grant of student visas for allowing admission in Indian institutions to Pakistani students on a case-by-case basis.

India presented a draft proposing amendments to the present India-Pakistan Visa Agreement during the visit of former Extenal Affairs Minister to Pakistan from 2-5 October 2005. The draft envisages longer duration visit visas for people from both countries and proposes the addition of new categories of visas such as student, pilgrims and business visa to facilitate easier movement of people across the border. Pakistan has not given its response to this draft visa agreement. Talks on visa matters are continuing in the third round of the India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue.

(b) and (c) With regard to senior citizens, on 18 September 2004, Government had announced unilaterally the grant of visas with exemption from reporting to the Police to all Pakistani nationals above the age of 65. Government unilaterally announced visa on arrival to be available at Wagah for Pakistani nationals above the age of 65 during the Forein Secretary level talks held on 27 December 2004. Pakistan, however, does not allow its citizens to come to the Wagah check-post without a visa for India.

Delhi-Kathmandu bus service

3530. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any poposal under the consideration of Government to start a bus service between Delhi and Kathmandu on the pattern of Srinagar-Muzaffarbad bus service;

(b) if so, the time by which the said proposal is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The proposal for a Delhi-Kathmandu bus service is part of a Motor Vehicle Agreement between India and Nepal that has been initialled by the two governments. The agreement will be signed and brought into effect, after approval is received from His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

(c) Not applicable.

Amritsar-Nankana Sahib Bus Service

3531. SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) when was the bus service from Amritsar to Nankana Sahib (Pakistan) started;

(b) the number of passengers that have utilized this both ways till 30th April, 2006;

(c) what are the difficulties about its popularity;

(d) what steps are going to be taken by Government like easy grant of Visa; and

(e) the similar details regarding Amritsar-Lahore Bus Service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) the bus service from Amritsar to Nankana Sahib commenced from 24 March 2006.

(b) Sixty-nine passengers have utilized this bus service in the Indian bus both ways till 30 April 2006.

(c) The bus service from Amritsar to Nankana Sahib has been widely welcomed and the people have shown keen interest in travelling on this bus. However, reports indicate that they face difficulty in obtaining visas for Pakistan.